

## Claims

- [c1] A process for decontaminating mail in a mailbox comprising:  
receiving an indication to start a mail decontamination cycle; and  
commencing a decontamination cycle of a decontamination system.
- [c2] The method of claim 1 further comprising:  
providing a hazard indication;  
beginning a timer;  
determining a safe condition; and  
providing an indication of the safe condition.
- [c3] The method of claim 2 further comprising:  
locking the mailbox after providing the hazard indication; and  
unlocking the mailbox after providing the safe condition indication.
- [c4] The method of claim 2 further comprising:  
detecting the presence of mail in the mailbox.
- [c5] The method of claim 2 wherein the indication is provided to a remote location  
using a communications channel.
- [c6] The method of claim 1 further comprising separating mail pieces in the  
mailbox.
- [c7] A mailbox system for decontaminating mail comprising:  
a door for allowing access to the interior of the mailbox; and  
a decontamination system operatively connected to a controller for  
decontaminating mail.
- [c8] The mailbox of claim 7 further comprising:  
a controller having a timer for controlling a decontamination cycle;  
a power supply connected to the controller; and  
a display connected to the controller for providing indications.
- [c9] The mailbox of claim 8 wherein,  
the door includes a lock operatively connected to the controller; and

the door provides a hermetic seal when closed.

[c10] The mailbox of claim 8 further comprising:  
means for detecting the presence of mail in the mailbox operatively connected  
to the controller for initiating the decontamination cycle.

[c11] The mailbox of claim 8 wherein:  
the decontamination system includes a soft-electron beam source.

[c12] The mailbox of claim 8 wherein:  
the decontamination system includes a hard-electron beam source.

[c13] The mailbox of claim 8 wherein:  
the decontamination system includes a x-ray source.

[c14] The mailbox of claim 8 wherein:  
the decontamination system includes a microwave source.

[c15] The mailbox of claim 8 wherein:  
the decontamination system includes a variable frequency microwave beam  
source.

[c16] The mailbox of claim 8 wherein:  
the decontamination system includes an ultra violet light source.

[c17] The mailbox of claim 16 wherein:  
the decontamination system includes a variable frequency microwave beam  
source; and  
the mailbox includes dividers for exposing mail pieces to ultra violet light.

[c18] The mailbox of claim 8 wherein:  
the decontamination system includes a chlorine gas source.

[c19] The mailbox of claim 8 wherein:  
the decontamination system includes a chlorine dioxide gas source.

[c20] The mailbox of claim 19 wherein:  
the decontamination system includes a chlorine dioxide evacuation chamber.

- [c21] The mailbox of claim 8 wherein:  
the decontamination system includes an ozone source.
- [c22] The mailbox of claim 21 wherein:  
the decontamination system includes a hopcolyte filter.
- [c23] The mailbox of claim 7 wherein:  
the decontamination system includes a dry heat source.
- [c24] The mailbox of claim 7 wherein:  
the decontamination system includes a super-heated steam source.
- [c25] The mailbox of claim 7 wherein:  
the mailbox includes a separation frame for separating mail pieces.

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